

Seattle City Council

**Neighborhoods, Arts, & Civil Rights Committee Meeting**

Tuesday, 2 PM, June 10th, 2003

**Words' Worth**

The Poetry Program of the Seattle City Council

Curated by **Christopher J. Jarmick**

Today's Words' Worth poet is **M. Anne Sweet**

M. Anne Sweet is a performance poet and artist. A second printing of her poetry collection, *Nailed to the Sky* (Linear Arts Books, 2000), is due out in 2003 from Gazoobi Tales Publishing. Her poetry has appeared in *The Seattle Five Plus One: Poetry* (Pig Iron Press, 1995), as well as numerous print and online journals, such as *Crab Creek Review*, *The Raven Chronicles*, *Pontoon #3 and #5*, *The Comstock Review*, *PoetsWest Literary Journal*, *Main Street Rag Poetry Journal*, *The Horsethief's Journal*, and *Switched-on Gutenberg*. In April 2003 she had a two person show of photographs from Cuba with artist and musician Charles Morgan (Chuck) Smart. She is the art director for a magazine about thoroughbred racehorses. She recently won this year's Bart Baxter Performance award from the Washington Poets Association.

**Chorus Line**

By M. Anne Sweet

Chorus girls bob beatwise,  
dark-haired,  
arm pit to arm pit,  
in long-legged lines,  
all the same namelessness  
built up in their faces.  
Their cast iron consciousness,  
eighteen all-legs-one  
catapult my daydreams sideways.  
I do not try to escape.  
I try to think their samethoughts,  
their Catholic school girlthoughts,  
but my rough edges  
scrape at their bare thighs.  
I bow apologetic genuflections

and wish I had not touched them.  
Martyred stillborn children  
are they real?  
or wind-up representations  
of coalesced fragments  
of the massive oneness of us all?  
If for only just one misstep  
I could count the separate beats  
of their heartthrobs.  
Stiletto-heeled women,  
they have kept to themselves  
in their own same way.  
It is the way each their dust has settled  
that makes them whole  
and alone.

Dust finds all the small differences.  
I lean close  
and carefully  
do not breathe it away.

### **1st and Pine Encounter**

by M. Anne Sweet

Man on the street stops to tell me  
I look good. I stare at him –  
black, bearded, he carries a guitar.  
There have been others  
I walked on by –  
a nod, a comment,  
a sly glance at white skin  
edged by short cropped top.

The light does not change.  
Caught on a corner  
I hear myself say thank you,  
ask, is he from Seattle,  
does he play his guitar,  
has he been here long.  
He mouths vague syllables –  
Spokane, yes, no not long.

Something of his guitar  
he sees in me.

A slim belt hugs my waist,  
the sun presses hot on black jeans,  
snug hipped, long, rolled  
above red sandals.  
A glare of rare heat  
sparks his eye.

Not the first to ask for my hand –  
quarters, cash or cigarettes –  
You spoke to me, he says.  
The light changes, my walk hesitates.  
That is all he asks.

-- *END* --